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Votes for HEALTH Act during Energy and Commerce Committee markup

May 11, 2011

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) voted today to reform frivolous medical liability claims that drive up the costs of health care by forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine. The House Energy and Commerce Committee passed the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Health Care (HEALTH) Act (H.R. 5) during a markup of the legislation this afternoon.

H.R. 5 would enact limits on non-economic damages and set reasonable standards – not caps – for punitive damages. The bill would not pre-empt any state statutory limit on compensatory or punitive damages.

Bass, a cosponsor of the legislation, said:

"Doctors are often times forced to order additional and redundant tests and procedures to avoid potential litigation. This defensive medicine drives up the cost of health care for everyone and makes it more difficult for businesses to create jobs. In fact, a study by the PricewaterhouseCoopers' Health Research Institute (HRI) estimates this practice costs the health care industry \$210 billion annually.

"Medical liability reform is an idea we can all support – even President Obama expressed his desire to move forward on meaningful liability reform during his State of the Union address in January. These reforms, and other patient-based solutions, will help to improve affordability and accessibility to health care for all Americans."

The legislation now awaits a vote by the full House of Representatives.

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